. WISCONSIN BAILROAD GRANT.

SPEECH OF HON, JOHN LETCHER, OF VIRGINIA, In the House of Representatives, March 1, 1854, in reply to Mr. Disney, of Ohio, and others.

Mr. LETCHER obtained the floor. Mr. JONES, of Tennessee. If the gentleman from Virginia [Mr. Letcher] will yield the floor. I will move that the House resolve itself into

Union.
Mr. LETCHER. If I yield the floor to enable the gentlemen from Tennessee to make that mo-tion, will I be entitled to the floor in the morn-

ing? The SPEAKER. The gentleman from Virginia would be entitled to the floor.
Mr. JONES. I then make the motion that the House resolve itself into the Committee of the

Whole on the state of the Union.

Mr. SEWARD. I rise to a question of order.

The House having refused to sustain the demand for the previous question, the subject must lie over one day. It is absurd, after the House has refused to second the demand for the previous question, to go on with the consideration and discussion of the bill.

The SPEAKER. The practice of the House

is, that if the House refuse to order the main question, the subject must go over one day; but, failing to second the demand for the previous question, leaves the subject under consideration where it was before the demand was made. The question is upon the motion to go into the Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union.

Mr. HAMILTON. I rise to a question of order. I want to know how the floor has been taken from the gentleman from Virginia? [Mr. LETCHER]

LETCHER]
The SPEAKER. The gentleman from Vir ginia yielded the floor to another gentleman for the purpose of making the motion that the House resolve itself into the Committee of the Whole on

the state of the Union.

The question was taken; and, upon a division there were-yeas 52; a further cou

manded.
So the House refused to go into the Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union.
The SPEAKER. The gentleman from Virginia [Mr. LETCHER] is now entitled to the floor.
Mr. DISNEY. I rise to a question of order. I desire to know if the gentleman from Virginia did not speak upon this question on Thursday last, when he chieved to my comprise the floor. when he objected to my occupying the floor?

Mr. LETCHER. I do not reckon he did.

Mr. DISNEY. Well, sir, I do reckon he did.

[Laughter.] Mr. LETCHER. Then I appeal to the Chain to decide between us. There was another question to which a motion had been made to refer i to the Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union. I then made some reference to this me to order. Does the gentleman recollect that?
Mr. DISNEY. I do.
Mr. LETCHER. And the geutleman told me that I should have a fair chance to discuss this bill

before the vote was taken

Mr. DISNEY. I ask that the Chair shall decide the question whether the gentleman from Virginia is entitled to the floor? My recollection, and, that of other members of the House is, that the gentleman has spoken once upon this subject, and is, therefore, not entitled to the floor. So far as I am concerned, I have no objection to his going on, but I ask the Chair to decide the ques-

The SPEAKER. If the gentleman from Virginia had spoken once upon the question pending he would be entitled to the floor if no other gen tleman desired to speak. The gentleman from Ohio cannot claim it for himself because he has certainly spoken once upon the question.

Mr. JONES, of Tennessee. I would inquire
if the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. DISNEY] has not

ready spoken twice upon this question?
The SPEAKER. Not on the motion to commit
Mr. JONES. Then he is still entitled to anothe The SPEAKER. The gentleman from Ohio

Mr. LETCHER. Mr. Speaker, it seems to m that the policy which has been adopted with regard to this bill, indicates very clearly to the regard to this bill, indicates very clearly to the House the necessity for a thorough examination of all the measures of this character which are presented for our consideration. It seems to me that this policy proves conclusively the propriety of referring all such measures to a committee of the whole House, where an opportunity may be given for discussion and investigation in regard to their measures.

Now, sir, here is a proposition which has been Now, sir, here is a proposition which has been brought into this House, and without giving any member an opportunity of examining into its details, or the principles involved in it, a motion to stop debate is made by the chairman of the Committee on Public Lands, (Mr. Disser,) after a speech from himself, and after another speech from a member who is interested in this road After two speeches upon one side, and none upon the other, an attempt is made to gag everybody who is opposed to it, and rush it through the House under the operation of the previous ques-

tion. Sir, if this proposition had merits, if its various provisions could bear the test of careful examina-tion, if the considerations which were alluded to by the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. Wells) on yesterday, could bear the light for a single moment, would such a course as this have been adopted? I was struck with the avowal made upon this floor yesterday, by the gentleman from Wisconsin. I do not know what part of the State

he comes from—
A Мизики. From Milwaukie.
Mr. LETCHER. Yes, from Milwaukie. told us that he was opposed to this bill; that he had opposed it in committee, but that he intended to wait, under an understanding with his col leagues here, to see whether a contract was to be executed. What contract? What contract has been made between these parties? What is the understanding alluded to, by which the vote of a member upon a proposition he disapproves of, is so influenced that it may be east in favor of it, provided other parties will do something as an equiv

Mr. EASTMAN. I feel it, my duty to interrupt the gentleman,
The SPEAKER. Does the gentleman from

Virginia yield the floor?

Mr. LETCHER. Ob, certainly. I shall not practice on him what he wanted to practice on

Mr. EASTMAN. I desire to correct a state

Mr. EASTMAN. I desire to correct a statement of fact, and to set the gentleman right as he goes along. I did not understand my colleague as saying what the gentleman has put into his mouth, and, with the leave of the House, I will read what he did say. Mr. Wells said:

"The gentleman from Illinois [Mr. Wentworth] has called upon me to say whether I acquiesce in this measure. I would reply that I have been opposed to it. I opposed it before the scommittee. I have no hesitation in saying that it is generally considered as unfavorable to the Milwaukie and Lake Shore interests. The bill, having passed the Senate, came to the House. The majority of the committee were in favor of it. The rest of the delegation from Wisconsin were known to advocate its passage; and I had concluded not to make open opposition to it on this floor, with the understanding that my colleague would also remain silent, and that we should leave the House to pass upon its merits, after both sides had been fairly prepass upon its merits, after both sides had been fairly pre-sented by those not immediately interested. I have adopted this course, too, in the hope that it would secure a favorable consideration to other bills, which would

"I suppose I have the right to answer affirmatively, or

negatively, or neither. In the present condition of things, I prefer not to answer stall, but to wait the further action of the House."

Now, where is the contract that the gentleman alluded to? As for me, I know of no contract. I have made no contract. I state, as I stated before, that I live in a remote part of the State. I am as favorable to one railroad as I am to another; to the Milwaukie and Mississippi road as I am to this, and to this as I am to that; but what I say is, that one should not be passed at the expense of the other. I have made no contract. I am above contracts. I am not to be bought, and neither am I to be intimidated. Mr. LETCHER. Here is what the gentleman

"Mr. DISNEY. I desire to ask the gentleman from Wis-consin whether he intends to vote for the bill now under oneideration?
"Mr. Whits. I have some question about it."

Why had Mr. Wells "some question" about it? Had not he already acknowledged that he was opposed to the bill? So great was his opposition to it, that he even went before the committee and to it, that he even went before the committee and manifested his opposition to it by seeking to defeat its introduction into this House by its passage through that committee. What, then, is it that induces him to announce to this House that he has "some question about it?" It is the mere fact that he and the other gentleman from Wisconsin had agreed that neither should say anything? And, by the way, with that agreement.

the previous question? How can that be explained?

Mr. EASTMAN. I apprehend that there is nore than one gentleman from Wisconsin. Does allude to me?

Mr. LETCHER. speech to-day in favor of the bill, and then moves the previous question? How can that be ex-

more than one gentleman from he allude to me?

Mr. LETCHER. There are three here. I take it the gentleman on the other side of the House is in for it rather deeper than you are, from all I can

see. [Laughter.]
But, sir, the gentleman over the way tells us that there is nothing in this bill which is calculated to conflict with the interests already created by legislative acts in the State of Wisconsin in the es-tablishment of other roads. Now, I shall endeavor tablishment of other roads. Now, I shall endeavor to satisfy the House, from a map which I have before me, that there is a direct and positive conflict; and that if Congress shall step in and pass this bill in the shape in which it has been introduced into this House, it will lend itself to the accomplishment of a destruction of the private rights and the pecuniary interests of various individuals on the line of the Milwaukie and Madisen road, which have been embarked in that scheme What is it they propose to do? Under this bill they propose to grant lands to a railroad which in called the Rock River Union Valley railroad, that commences at Chicago and runs northwest to the town of Janesville. Then, sir, it runs northeast to Fond du Lac. Then it runs nearly in a north direction for some twenty miles. Then

to the town of Janesville. Then, sir, it runs northeast to Fond du Lac. Then it runs nearly in a north direction for some twenty miles. Then it runs in rather a northwesterly direction, somewhat zigzag, to the point on Lake Superior.

Why is it, I ask, when a road is projected, (the Mississippi and Lake Shore Railroad,) from the town of Chicago direct to Fond du Lac, a distance of one hundred and forty or one hundred and fifty miles, that they are seeking by this road to establish another between the same points by running around through the interior so as to avoid the harbors and the cities located on the lake shore? In our country, and I imagine even in the State of Ohio, in which the chairman of the Committee on Public Lands lives, there is a feeling of State pride. There is an anxious desire on the part even of the gentleman himself to build up Cincinnati as the great commercial, the great business point, the chief city for the State of Ohio. You would never find him here making a war on a city within the limits of his own State for the purpose of carrying the trade out of it over to Louisville, in the State of my friend who sits near me, [Mr. Preston.] Yet we have this anomaly here Here are two representatives of Wisconsin on this floor warring on Milwaukie and the other cities of their own State, situated on the lake shore, for the purpose of building up Chicago, in the State of Illinois.

What is the interest of this government? Is it not to make connections between the harbors on the lakes and the back country? Should not that

not to make connections between the harbors on the lakes and the back country? Should not that the lakes and the back country? Should not that be the great object it should have in view? Is it not the great interest with the government itself, in the event of difficulty or foreign troubles, to have its connections with its own harbors, so that it can transport whatever is to be sent to those points into the interior of the country? But the government here is asked not to adopt that policy, but to disregard it, and to go for the establishment of another road, which runs some sixty miles at one point from the lake shore, and thirty miles at another point from the same lake shore. Now, will any gentleman tell me that it is the interest of will any gentleman tell me that it is the interest of

But let me test these gentlemen still further. They say that there is no conflict by this scheme with the private interests of those who have embarked their means in the construction of this barked their means in the construction of this Milwaukie and Madison railroad. Mortgages on the farms of those living along the line of it have been executed, and are now in full force, as I unstand. The only hope for the redemption of these mortgages, and the relief of the land-holders, is by the profits which they anticipate upon the completion of the Milwaukie and Madison road. From Janesville to Madison is about fifty or sixty miles, and the proposed road runs nearly parallel with the line of the Milwaukie and Madison railroad. Twelve miles is the furthest point that those lines are apart; so that there will be an average distance between them of something like six miles. mice between them of something like six miles.
Mr. EASTMAN. The distance to Madison from

he point indicated is not fifty or sixty miles. It s not above thirty. Mr. LETCHER. Then the scale of the map

must be wrong.

Mr. EASTMAN. At most it is not over forty miles from Janesville to Madison. If the gentleman will deduct twelve from forty, how will he make the distance fifty or sixty? If he wants to make it that distance, he must lengthen the route.

Mr. LETCHER. Here then is a conflict of the covernment is asked to fur-Mr. LETCHER. Here then is a conflict of interests. Here the government is asked to furnish lands to this Rock River Union Valley Railroad Company for the purpose of enabling them to make a parallel line from Janesville to the town of Madison; and yet gentlemen say that it cannot produce any conflict of interest; that it will do no harm to the Madison and Milwaukie railroad put it to the common sense of every gentleman in this House, if there is even a show of plausibility

Mr. DISNEY. Has not the gentleman from Virginia [Mr. LETCHER] yet learned that I have this morning offered an amendment to the bill, which specially and specifically provides that this road shall not obtain one acre of land from the government on the line of the road between the town of Madison and the southern boundary of the

State of Wisconsin?

Mr. LETCHER. One thing at a time. If the gentleman [Mr. Disney] will have patience, I will soon get to that amendment, and show that, as the gentleman himself says, it is no great affair after

Now, sir, I think I have shown that there is a conflict of interest. Then there is another consideration. There is not a foot of public land, as I am informed, from the city of Chicago, in Illinois, where this road commences, until you get beyond Madison, a distance of perhaps one hundred and

fifty or sixty miles.

Then take the other line of the proposed road There are no put lie lands till you get twenty miles above Fond du Lac. So, here they are running a road for one hundred and ninety miles in one direction to that po.nt, and one hundred and fifty or one hundred and sixty miles in another direction

hundred and sixty miles in another direction, through a country where there is not a foot of public lands; and yet the gentleman over the way offers an amendment which he thinks meets exactly the state of the case.

[A message was here received from the President of the United States, by the hands of Sidney Webster, esq., his private secretary, informing the House that he had signed certain bills and joint resolutions.]

solutions.)
Mr. LETCHER. I understand that this Rock Mr. LETCHER. I understand that this Rock River Union Valley Railroad Company, like a great many other railroad companies scattered throughout the country, is in a dilapidated condition. It is thought by most people to be approaching a state of insolvency; and I have heard it intimated that even the iron which had been bought for this Rock River Union Valley Railroad was actually sold to raise the means to help those generates as who are amployed to manage the matter. tlemen who are employed to manage the matter and secure the passage of the bill through this House. What is the meaning of this proposition offered under these circumstances, by the chair man of the Committee on Public Lands? Here

"Provided that the road herein provided for shall not be construed to extend to any land on the line of the said road between the town of Madison and the southern bound-ary of the State of Wisconsin." or, in other words, between the town of Madi-son and the city of Chicago. That is the begin-

ning point.

Now, suppose you give them the land above That is what he did say.

A MEMBER. Ah! but there was something more after that.

Mr. LETCHER. Wait a moment, and I will read it for the gentleman.

Mr. EASTMAN. Yes, he went on further to say, in answer to a question whether he would the gentleman (Mr. Disney) had said here that he would be gentleman (Mr. Disney) ha proposed to amend the bill by requiring that the road should start at Fond du Lac, or twenty miles above it, where the public lands begin, and that land should be donated for six miles on either side of the road, or for fifteen miles in the contingency stated, and should be applied to the construction of the road from that point to its terminus at Lake Superior, and that the lands so granted should no Superior, and that the lands so granted should not be pledged in any way, nor any of the proceeds arising therefrom used to aid in constructing the line between Madison and Janesville, or the line between Fond du Lac and Chicago. But, sir, the object of this bill is to revive the credit of this company, and thus enable it to break down private interests, and subject those interested in the Madison and Milwaukie railroad to serious pecuniary

Mr. DISNEY, (interrupting.) I wish to inqu of the gentleman if he ever read a very celebrated chapter in one of Fielding's novels, in which the the better for knowing something of the sub-upon which he attempts to write. It is very in

upon which he attempts to write. It is very in esting.

Apropos, has the gentleman from Virginia read bill the upon which he is commenting? I am sure he has not; for let me say to him, that i under the provisions of that bill, and by the construction given by the land office to similar provisions in other bills, the road can obtain no land except such as lie alongside of the road proposed to be constructed; or, to use the language of the Land Office, they cannot go to one point of the

how comes it that he [Mr. EASTMAN] makes a State and select lands with which to construct and it is so

Mr. LETCHER. I like to see this restlessness on the part of the friends of this bill. It seems to me to indicate that there is a "good time coming," [laughter,] and that we shall find them hereafter, at least, advocating a little more consideration for bills of this sort than they have hitherto been willing to allow to them.

It seems quite unfortunate that the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. Disney] either did not hear me, or did not understand my point. It therefore occurs to me that he might have read the essay to which he alludes with advantage. It might be of

which he alludes with advantage. It might be some service to him to listen to my remarks be-fore he undertakes to reply. Now, did I say anyfore he undertakes to reply. Now, did I say anything about the governor, or the President, or the Commissioner of the Land Office, or anybody else, deciding how these lands were to be assigned? Not at all. But I take the ground that the public lands, beginning at Fond du Lac, and extending to Lake Superior, are the lands out of which the company must procure their alternate sections. And cannot the company pledge that land as security for loans, and apply the money so raised to the building of the road below? What is to prohibit them from doing so under this law?

Suppose they do it. Cannot the twenty miles begin at Chicago as well as anywhere else; and cannot they make the twenty miles anywhere they please along the line? Certainly they may.

please along the line? Certainly they may. Well, Mr. Speaker, there is one thing which will settle the matter. I put the question to the gentleman from Ohio, [Mr. Diskry.] whether the company is not upon its last legs? [Laughter.] The gentleman's answer will, I have no doubt, settle

the question.

Mr. DISNEY. I respond again, that this gran Mr. DISNEY. I respond again, that this grant is to the State of Wisconsin, and not to that or any other company. The State of Wisconsin will have the control of this grant for the purposes indicated by the bill, for the construction of a road between the points indicated; and whether that company he upon its last or its first legs, is a matter of no sort of importance to this Congress, because the grant is made for a specific purpose, the construction of that road, and the State of Wisconsin becomes the trustee for that obiest. comes the trustee for that object.

By the provisions of that bill, as I remarked be

fore, the proceeds of this land are to be applied to the building of the road in sections of twenty continuous miles, through the portion of country from which the lands are selected; the sales to be made as the consecutive sections are built.

Mr. LETCHER. The gentleman from Ohio does not answer me directly, and I take it that he dodges the question, because he does not want to say anything about the dead. [Laughter.] He does not want to acknowledge the fact that this concern is really insolvent, because if he did he might lose votes for the measure. But, says the gentleman, you do not vote money to this com-pany; you give the land to the State by this bill. But who gets the land after the State by this bill. But who gets the land after it is turned over by the State to the railroad company? A few years ago we voted some land to Illinois for railroad purposes. Who got it? The Wall street brokers got it, if I have read the history of that road aright. Do they not hold it now, and have they not abso-

ute control of it? Mr. BISSELL. Will the gentleman allow me to answer his question? The Wall street brokers to answer his question? The Wall street brokers do not hold this land.

Mr. LETCHER. I have a pamphlet here, which will show the history of this matter. We gave land to the State of Illinois for the purpose of building the Central Road to Chicago, with a branch running to Galena. Who were the members of this company? We are aware of the fact, that Mr. Rantoul, a member of this House of this last Congress, was one of the parties concerned in this road. How did this gentleman, living in the State of Massachusetts, become interested in it? Who are the other parties mentioned in the act incorporating this company? Their names, in the first porating this company? Their names, in the first section of "An act to incorporate the Illinois Central Railroad Company," are recorded as fol-

"Robert Schuyler, George Griswold, Gouveneur Morris, Franklin Haven, David A. Neal, Robert Rantoul, jr., Jona-than Sturgis, George W. Ludlow, John F. A. Sanford, Henry Grinnel, William H. Aspinwall, Leroy Wiley, and Joseph W. Alsop, and all such persons as shaft hereafter become stockholders in the company hereby incorpo-

Where do all these gentlemen live? Do they Mr. BISSELL. I will answer the gentleman They do not live in the State of Illinois— Mr. LETCHER. Then you are sold out

Mr. BISTELL. The gentleman from Virginia seems very unwilling to hear answers to his own questions. These gentlemen do not live in the State of Illinois, nor have they got control of these lands at all. Is the gentleman answered now? The lands are in the hands of, and are solely in the charge of trustees. the charge of trustees.

Mr. LETCHER. Trustees! Who get the proceeds of these lands? Who compose the company that furnish the means to make the road? Whose property is exempt from taxation for six

years? Mr. BISSELL. The company will furnish \$17,000,000 to build the road. The State receives what is equivalent to fourteen per cent. of the net proceeds from the time the road is completed. When all the terms and conditions are complied with, then these lands are to be sold for the benefit of the company, and to the payment of the money which they borrowed to build the road with. The

lands are in charge of trustees, and under the control of a company, one of them being the governor of the State of Illinois.

Mr. LETCHER. I have shown you who comose the company organized for the construction this road. The gentleman from Illinois says that trustees are the parties who are to manage it. Who are they to manage it for, but these New Yorkers? The State of Illinois is to receive New Yorkers? The State of Illinois is to receive seven per cent. of the gross proceeds when the work is done, which is equal to fourteen per cent. of the net proceeds. I stated that \$17,000,000 are to be furnished to build the road. If the gentleman does not acknowledge that, I can establish by documents which I have here. The company say that they can build the road for that amount. They value the lands at \$21,000,000. Who They value the lands at \$21,000,000. Who pockets the difference? What becomes of the

rustees then? Mr. BISSELL. The prospective value which they may put upon their lands may be more or less. I do not think they expect to realize a dol they may put upon their lands may be more or less. I do not think they expect to realize a dollar from them until they have expended four or five years' labor, and \$17,000,000 of their own money upon the road. When all that is done, when all this money has been expended, they will make something handsome out of it, provided they realize—which I have no idea they will—\$20,000,000 out of the sales of the land; and provided they exist out of constructing the road does vided the entire cost of constructing the road does not exceed \$17,000,000. If this turns out to be r

not exceed \$17,000,000. If this turns out to be a correct statement of the amount of receipts and expenditures, they will, in the end, make some three or four millions out of the operation.

Mr. LETCHER. Then the gentleman's explanation amounts exactly to this: These stockholders have the control of a road, according to their own showing, that will yield them a clear annual rofit, after paying seven per cent to the State and all other expenses, of \$1,774,252, and give them three or four millions besides, from the sale of the lands, beyond the whole cost of construct ng the road-quite a handsome speculation for the

ockholders!
Mr. DISNEY. Well, what of it?
Mr. LETCHER. I will tell the gentleman what
fit. It shows exactly this: that you are asking the federal government not only to give land enough to make the roads, but to make a fortune for these Wall street brokers besides. That is

Mr. YATES. I wish to say one word in reference to this proposition of donating lands to the State of Illinois to aid in the construction of the Illinois Central railroad. I can give the gentleman an answer that ought to be satisfactory to him and to the House.

Mr. LETCHER. I hope the gentleman will

Mr. LETCHER. I hope the gentleman will come to the point as soon as possible.

Mr. YATES. The gentleman asked what has been done! Why, sir, we have a road seven hundred and four miles in length, of great importance to the State of Illinois, of great advantage to the people of that State, and of great national advantage; and all this without the loss of one cent to the general government. And not only has the general government not lost anything by it, but it has sold lands which have been for twenty-five years in the market and still remained unsold, so years in the market and still remained unsold, so years in the market and shift remained unsold, so that it has actually placed money in the treasury by the operation. Sir, is it nothing that we have built the longest and most magnificent railroad in the world, without the loss of a cent upon the part

the world, without the loss of a cent upon the part of the general government?

Mr. LETCHER. Let us look for a moment at the past financial history of the State of Illinois. If I am not mistaken, before that State received the benefit of this land from the federal government, her financial condition was exceedingly embarrassed. She was not able to prosecute her great works of internal improvement because of the immense debt which was then resting upon her. Her bonds had depreciated to an alarming extent. But no sooner had this land been donated by the federal government—no sooner had

te of Illinois.

State of Illinois.

But, in addition to all this, I hold that we have a written constitution, and that it is our business to protect that written Constitution, and to carry it out fairly, according to the provisions contained within it. But nearly every member who is in favor of these railroad grants, has contended that the federal government ought not to be the owner of lands at all; that it ought not to be in the market selling these lands, but that they should belong to the States in which they lie. That is the argument, and that is the conclusion derived from it. Well, sir, in carrying our this system of internal improvements, which is a general system, a thorough system, so far as the new States are concerned, they accomplish all their purposes by the government but the property of the government but the government but the property of the government, occupying the same relation towards it as do the public lands? The nation's wealth consists, in part, in the money it receives from the sale of the public lands. Then can the government give away its property in money for the construction of railroads? If not, what right has it to give away its property in these public lands, which bear the same relation to it as money itself? The Constitution now reads: "that Congress shall have power to dispose of." and so forth; but, according to the new reading approved by these gentlemen, it ought to run "that Congress shall have power to dispose of." and so forth; but, according to the new reading approved by these gentlemen, it ought to run "that Congress shall have power to dispose of." and so forth, but, according to the new reading approved by these gentlemen, it ought to run "that Congress shall have power to dispose of." That is the result of it, according to their construction, when reduced to practice. It means nothing more, and it means nothing less.

Now look at all these projected railroads to which gentlemen are urging Congress to accord lands to aid in their construction. If the railroads are of any advantag

and do it hereafter.

But let me return to this Milwaukes railroad The gentieman from Ohio tells us that the policy of the Committee on Public Lands is to equalize the grants to all these States, and to give them as much as has been granted to the State of Illinois. Now Illinois received for her Central railroad 2,593,000 acres, if my recollection is correct.
The State of Wisconsin has already received

The State of Wisconsin has already received for internal improvements 949,000 and odd acres. One million six hundred thousand acres are embraced in this hill, as I understand the gentleman from Ohio. Then he tells us that the committee have agreed upon another bill making a donation of land for a road from Madison to Pruirie du Chien, and that bill embraces 300,000 acres. That makes 1,9f0,000 acres, and with the 949,000 already received, gives 2,900,000 and odd acres, so that if this bill passes, they will have received 400,000 acres more than Illinois has received. I like to be accurate about these things, and I will therefore acres more than Illinois has received. I like to be accurate about these things, and I will therefore refer to the book. I see it is set down here that the lands sold in the State of Wisconsin up to June 30, 1853, amounted to 5,045,242 acres; lands donated for schools, universities and so forth, 1,400-728 acres; and that the lands donated for internal improvements amounted to 929,736 acres. Now, add to that the 1,900,000 acres embraced in this bill, and you then have very nearly three millions acres granted to the State of Wisconsin.

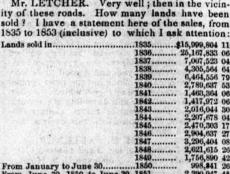
Well, sir, by way of justifying this mode of disposing of the lands, the gentleman tells us that the President of the United States is for it; that the Commissioner of the General Land Office is for it; and that, inasmuch as all these parties are for

Commissioner of the General Land Office is for it; and that, inasmuch as all these parties are for it, it must be conclusive as to the propriety of the, policy. Now, I do not hold to any such doctrine that because a President or Secretary entertain particular opinions, everybody else is to hold the same opinions on the same subject. I come here to represent a district that entertains opinions altogether different on this question—that maintains that Congress has no right, either directly or indirectly, to appropriate the lands or money of the Federal Government to internal improvements. Here is the platform as adopted by the Democratic State Convention held in Richmond in March, 1852:

Resolved, That Congress has no power to appropriate directly or indirectly, the proceeds of the sales of the public lands, or to grant, directly or indirectly, the public lands to the purpose of internal improvement."

I stand on that platform. I hold to that doctrine in common with the Democratic party of my State. I believe it to be sound doctrine; and so believing, I do not come here to surrender my convictions because a President of the United States, or a Secretary of the Interior, or anybody else occupying a high-official position, entertains a different opinion. As to the Secretary of the In-State which has profited largely by this mode disposing of the public lands. In his service Congress he was committed to all these grants. can ascertain very well how association, how po-litical interest controls the opinions of men; and these influences may control his in this matter But, by way of satisfying the House that this pol icy is proper and constitutional, the gentleman from Ohio says that under the influence of it publands have been sold, and that they are now selling, with more rapidity than public lands have been sold at any time heretofore in our history for

Mr. DISNEY. In the vicinity of these roads. Mr. DISNEY. In the vicinity of these roads.
Mr. LETCHER. Very well; then in the vicinity of these roads. How many lands have been sold? I have a statement here of the sales, from 1835 to 1853 (inclusive) to which I ask attention:



Thus we see that in 1835 and 1836 the sales

Thus we see that in 1835 and 1836 the sales were very large—amounting, in 1836, to more than \$25,000,000,

Now, the gentleman says that this is owing to the policy of allowing these grants to railroads, and that the land would not have sold at all if it had not been for the grants. It is attributable to no such thing. It is attributable to the state of things which existed in the country at the time

things which existed in the country at the time these sales were made.

The whole country was then wild with the spirit of speculation. Banks were multiplying. Everything in which a speculation could be made was sought for, greedily taken up, and earnestly prosecuted; and, under the influence of that speculating spirit, these extraordinary sales of the public lands were made. Look at the state of things now. Within the last two years, I venture to say that the banking capital of the country has been doubled, or, perhaps, more than doubled, taking one State with another. I believe that it has been so in my own State; and these are strong and one State with another. I believe that it has been so in my own State; and these are strong and conclusive indications of the speculating spirit which is abroad in the country at the present time. And if speculation brought about this result in 1835, 1836, and 1837, why cannot speculation bring it about in 1854. Will not the same result follow from the same cause? Then I say that it is not attributable to this policy at all. These lands would have been sold from this spirit of speculation. Do you not see, in proof of this position, that the gentlemen from these new States are warring against speculators here by amendments to the homestead bill, and in all other conceivable modes? They tell you that they do not want men to come into their country and buy up their public lands. What takes them there? Is it not the belief that they can make more money by investing in these lands than can be made by investing in these lands than can be made by investments in other speculations? Nothing has carried them into the new States but the hope of gain.

gain.

Let me tell the gentleman from the west on Let me tell the gentleman from the west one thing that will grow out of the policy pursued by them in reference to these land grants. You grant them to the State to be sure, but when so granted, the land immediately passes out of their hands into the grasp of soulless corporations. What will be the result? These corporations, invested with their great powers, are to have the benefit of all these lands, and the control of all these improvements. They are to have the power of disposing of them; and the result will be, that we shall hear against them the same complaint in regard to If I am not mistaken, before that State received the benefit of this land from the federal government, her financial condition was exceedingly embarrassed. She was not able to prosecute her great works of internal improvement because of the immense debt which was then resting upon her. Her bonds had depreciated to an alarming extent. But no sooner had this land been donated by the federal government—no sooner had the arrangements for the construction of the Central road gone into operation, than the credit of that State are as if by magic to par, showing that

I shall be surprised if, in the course of a very few years, we do not find some of these gentlemen proclaiming a doctrine which they regarded many years ago as remarkably odious—the doctrine of charter-breaking, started by Mr. Dallas, of Penn-

proclaiming a doctrine which they regarded many years ago as remarkably odious—the doctrine of charter-breaking, started by Mr. Dallas, of Pennsylvania.

The burden will grow intolerable, and they will desire to get rid of it. And in order to get rid of it, they will ask a repeal of the charter, and the charter will have to be repealed if they get the desired relief. I shall be surprised if such is not the result. I confidently expect it; and if the burden were upon any people other than those who made the bargain, I do not know but I should clap them on the back, and appland them for attempting to relieve themselves from it. But they have made their bed, and so let them lie.

Now, sir, in regard to this Illinois charter; I refer to it again for the purpose of showing that it is a somewhat different charter from the one-which is proposed in this act; the Illinois railroad charter is for "a grant of lands to the State of Illinois for the constructing of a railroad from the southern terminus of the Illinois and Michigan canal to a point at or near the junction of the Ohio and Mississippi rivers, with a branch of the same to Chicago, on Lake Michigan, &c."

Well, now, what does this bill propose? "That there be and is hereby granted to the State of Wisconsin, for the purpose of aiding in the construction of a railroad from near the boundary of said State, east of range thirteen, by way of Janesville, in Rock county, and Fond du Lac, on Lake Winnebago, to such point on Lake Superior as may be designated under the authority of said State, and for the construction of a branch railroad from Janesville, by way of Madison," &c.

Now, why does not this road run from Chicago to its terminus on Lake Superior by the most direct line? Is it necessary to run northwest for eighty or ninety miles, and then northwest again to Lake Superior? If the road were run straight from Chicago to Lake Superior, the distance would probably be one hundred and fifty or two hundred miles less than by the proposed route.

Mr. COBB, (interruptin

Mr. COBB, (interrupting.) Yes; but that route Mr. COBB. (interrupting.) Yes; but that route is perhaps impracticable.

Mr. LETCHER. Oh, no doubt; of course it is impracticable, when the company want to make war on these lake shore towns for the benefit of Chicago. It was that which made it impracticable. There cannot be any other reason for their running the road in the manner—they propose. But if that is impracticable, how do they expect to get up to the Falls of St. Croix river by the Ohio line?

Mr. COBB. To run record it.

ine?

Mr. COBB. To run round it.

Mr. LETCHER. Yet they propose to run one line of the Rock River Union Valley railroad to the falls of St. Croix, and the other to the point on Lake Superior; but neither of these reads can be run in a direct line for the greater part of the distance. They can run an air-line from Janesville to Chicago, or from Janesville to Fond du Lac, where there are no public lands; but whenever they come to the public lands, they run to the best advantage for the interests of the company.

Then it is a matter which is to profit them.

they come to the public lands, they run to the best advantage for the interests of the company.

Then it is a matter which is to profit them. Then they begin to see what is to be had when they get to that point. There is nothing to be had below it; why then run by this circuitous route below Front du Lac.' They run the road in the manner pointed out from their desire to withdraw trude from the lade above towns, that they may trude from the lade above towns, that they may trude from the lade above towns, that they may be profited the state of the state of the state of the public lands to the States within which they lie, for the public lands to the States within which they lie, for the public of the state of the

the form in which it passed the legislature of the said State.

I would state for your information that an important amendment was attached to the said memorial, as it finally passed, setting forth the terms upon which the State of Wisconsin desired land grants in aid of the railroads within its borders, which amendment does not now appear in the memorial. You will find a memorial, passed April 14, of the same year, and approved by the Governor, which embodies the principles of the amendment referred to. I would also state that the memorial first mentioned was never presented to me for Executive approval, but was sent in, contrary to usage, and without my knowledge, through the office of the Secretary of State. A reference to the acts passed by the legislature of the State of Wisconsin, for the year 1852, a copy of which will be found in the Congressional Library, will show that this memorial alone, of all passed during that easion, did not receive the approval, and does not bear the signature of the Governor of the State.

I have deemed it my imperative duty, as the late Governor of the said State, to call your attention to these facts, leaving you to take such action upon them as you may deem due to yourselves, and to the interests and honor of the State which you represent.

I remain, gentlemen, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

of the laws of the State of Wisconsin.

Mr. LETCHER. And that is the explanation of the gentleman! The governor of the State of Wisconsin says that his attention was called to this matter at the time. He informed me in conversation, after examining the records; that the proviso was there; and I shall show you what sort of a proviso it was from another law. Then, in addition to that, the gentleman over the way says that it is not usual for governors to sign such things. How came he to sign all the acts, resolutions, and memorials, except this one. The gentleman near me [Mr. Disney] says that he was stupid in signing any of them. What, sir! stupid

creetly, as I think, by these legislative acts. And in conforming his action to a requirement of the constitution of the State sort of a proviso was it?

"Provided the terms of the grant so made shall in no wise prevent the sale of such lands at the minimum price, and in the same quantities, at which lands are now sold by the United States government."

With all due deference to the opinions of other gentlemen, I think that it is a very sensible proviso, and I think that it would be calculated to prevent the public lands, donated to that State for the purposes of internal improvements, from going into the hands of corporations and speculators, who would keep them out of market, and so manage them as to make out of them the largest amount of profit. I have the book here with these memorials, and, as far as I have observed, this is the only one—standing out isolated from all the the only one—standing out isolated from all the rest—not having the approval of the executive of the State. If everything was fair in regard to this road, how did this happen? I will tell you how I understand it came about. The secretary of State of Wisconnin was in favor of unlimited State of Wisconsin was in favor of unlimited grants, and was opposed to the proviso which has been appended by the general assembly. I understood the governor to say that the proviso was taken off by some one in his office, and withheld it

stood the governor to say that the proviso was taken off by some one in his office, and withheld it from publication.

Is there not enough in this case to excite the suspicions of this House? Is there not enough in it to demand at our hands that the bill under consideration should go to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union, and that the people of Wisconsin should have an opportunity of being heard? Let the people of that State decide whether they are for or against it. Let us have time to send to the State of Wisconsin and get a certified copy of the memorial, as it passed the Legislature, from the office of the Secretary of State. Give the people of the State an opportunity of speaking out, and see how far they sustain the governor in the course which he has taken in regard to this railroad bill. I hope, then, that the House, taking a lesson from what has already occurred in the history of this case, will refer this bill to the Committee of the Whole. I hope that the House, when the friends of particular schemes have been heard to their own entire satisfaction, will not allow the gag to be applied when any other member desires to raise his voice against a scheme which he believes to be of doubtful character, to say the least of it; that they will teach this Committee on Public Lands that they must take their chances with the other committees in the House for the consideration and examination of their bills. There is nothing in this bill. in the House for the consideration and examina-tion of their bills. There is nothing in this bill, tion of their bills. There is nothing in this bill, it strikes me, that should commend it to the favorable action of this House. I hope, sir, this is the last time the Committee on Public Lands will attempt to gag the opponents of their bills, and force them through the House under the operation of the previous question.

But, sir, I design, at a proper time, to offer a substitute for this bill. I send it to the Clerk's desk, and ask that it may be read in the few minutes of my time, that are ver left. It was now.

desk, and ask that it may be read in the few minutes of my time that are yet left. It was prepared some years ago by my distinguished colleague in the other end of the capitol. [Mr.
HUNTER.] I think its provisions are just and wise,
and I hope it will receive fair consideration from
those who are interested in the land question. I
shall offer it, and see how far it will receive the
approbation of our friends from the land States.

The Clerk then read the bill.

to railroads, and that under the constitution of the State of Wisconsin, the governor of that State is required to approve the acis, resolutions, &c., of the general assembly before they become laws, or have the force of laws. But it is somewhat remarkable that the memorial in regard to this particular road is not approved by the governor. The memorial which appears above it, the one asking a grant of lands for the education of the deaf, dumb, and blind, is signed by the speaker, of both houses and approved by the governor. The one immediately below (the memorial referred to as justifying this bill) is signed by the speaker, Acc, but has no approved by the governor? How does this happen; why this difference? I will send to the Clerk's table a letter of ex-Governor Farwell, which the Clerk will read to the House.

The letter was read, as follows:

WABRIEWEYOR, Pebruary 28, 1864.

To the Sendors and Representatives is Congress from the State of Wisconsins. Washington, that the further time of two years shall be given it to complete the memorial of the Legislature of the State of Wisconsins, that the further time of two years shall be given it to complete the memorial of the Legislatures of the State of Wisconsins.

WASHIMMEN: On my arrival in this city on Saturaty evening, the 25th instant, my attention was called to the memorial of the Legislatures of the State of Wisconsins of the State for your information that on important amendment was atlached to the said memorial, that it is to the form of the will be said to the said memorial, that it is to the form of the will be said to the provided of the period by the provided application of the provided will be said to the memorial of the Legislature of the State of Wisconsin, containing the said of the Postmaster General, for which memorial of the Legislature of the state of the provided of th

I add an extract from the speech of the late Judge Woodbury, of New Hampshire, delivered in the United States Senate, February 23, 1830, on the subject of the disposition of the public lands, which is worthy of attention:

I remain, gentlemen, very respectfully, your obedient is revant,

LEONARD J. FARWELL.

That is a letter from the late governor of that State; and in looking through this book you will find the facts to be as he has represented them; that everything save this single momorial, so far as I have examined it, has the sanction of the governor, in the way of approval, appended to it. How does it happen?

Mr. EASTMAN (interrupting.) Will the gentleman slow me a moment for explanation?

Mr. LETCHER. Yes; but be brief.

Mr. EASTMAN. I deem it my duty to make a few marks in relation to the matter just alluded to by the gentleman from Virginia. I will be very brief.

Mr. LETCHER. Be very short. I have but a few minutes left, Mr. EASTMAN. This memorial is published by, and under the authority of the State of Wisconsin by the State printer.

Mr. LETCHER. I stated that myself.

Mr. LETCHER is many the scale printer.

Secretary of State. Now, it must have passed the two houses of the legislature. It received the signature of the speaker of the house of representatives and of the president of the senate, was signed by the clerks of both the house of representatives and the senate, examined by the enrolling and engrossing committee, and then seni to the printer, at the city of Madison, within thirty days after it was passed; and now, at this late day, when the senate, examined by the enrolling and engrossing committee, and then seni to the printer, at the city of Madison, within thirty days after it was passed; and now, at this late day, when the governor has gone out of office, he comes here. some two thousand miles from home, and, in a letter, states, from recollection only, that which will impench the acts o

Congressional.

THIRTY-THIRD CONGRESS. Monday, March 6, 1854.

Senate was not in session yesterday House of Representatives. Mr. RUSSELL, from the Committee on Printag, reported a joint resolution for settling the ecounts of A. Boyd Hamilton, which was passed.

OCEAN POSTAGE. Mr. APPLETON presented the resolutions of the legislature of Massachusetts in favor of cheap ocean postage. Laid on the table and ordered to be printed.

NERRASKA BILL Mr. FULLER presented the resolutions of the Mr. FULLER presented the resolutions of the legislature of Maine, instructing their senators, and requesting their representatives, to oppose in every practicable way the passage of the Nebraska bill, so long as it contains any provision rescinding or invalidating the Missouri compromise. Laid on the table and ordered to be printed.

HOMESTEAD BILL. The House resolved itself into a Committee of

The House resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole on the State of the Union [Mr. Olds in the chair] and resumed the consideration of the bill to encourage agriculture, commerce, manufactures, and all other branches of industry, by granting to every man who is the head of a family, and a citizen of the United States, a homestead of one hundred and sixty acres of land out of the public domain, upon condition of occupancy and cultivation of the same, for the period of five years.
After various amendments were offered and

After various amendments were offered and discussed, and several of them agreed to.

Mr. CHAMBERLAIN proposed additional sections, providing surveys and the construction of three railroads to the Pacific ocean.

The CHAIRMAN ruled the amendment out of order, on the ground of irrelevancy.

Mr. CHAMBERLAIN appealed from the decision; which, however, was, the question having been taken, sustained by the committee.

Mr. GROW said he would now offer a substitute for the bill.

tute for the bill.

Mr. HENN remarked he had proposed one, but was willing not to offer it, and suggested that other gentlemen who had prepared substitutes do the same; so as not to embarrass the bill and consume the time of the House.

Objection to this course was interposed.

Mr. WENTWORTH, of Illinois, rose to a point of order. He asked whether it was competent for gentlemen who had offered amendments to offer substitutes, the letter to undergo the same formality as the former, and thus go on to the end of time in this metter of broogens.

time, in this matter of buncombe.

Mr. HAMILTON called the gentleman to order.

Mr. COBB offered a substitute, which was,

same, or any part thereof; then, in such case, he, she, or they, shall be entitled to a patent, as in other cases provided for by law. Provided further, In case of the death of both father and mother, leaving an infant child or children under twentyone years of age, the right and the fee shall inure to the benefit of said infant, child, or children; and to the benefit of said infant, child, or children; and the executor, administrator, or guardian may, at any time within two years after the death of the surviving parent, and in accordance with the laws of the State in which such children for the time being have their domicil, sell said land for the benefit of said infants, but for no other purposes; and the purchaser shall acquire the absolute title

benefit of said infants, but for no other purpose; and the purchaser shall acquire the absolute little by the purchase, and be entitled to a patent from the United States.

The sixth section provides that if any individual now a resident of any one of the States or Territories, and not a citizen of the United States, but at the time of making such application for the benefit of this act, shall have filed a declaration of intention as required by the patentization laws of tention as required by the naturalization laws of the United States and shall become a citizen of the same before the issuance of the patent, as made and provided for in this act shall be placed upon an equal footing with the native-born citizen of the United States.

The other sections relate principally to details.
The bill was finally passed—yeas 107, nays 72;
as follows:

The other sections relate principally to details. The bill was finally passed—yeas 107, nays 72; as follows:

YEAS—Messrs. Abercrombie, James C. Allen, Willis Allen, Banks, Bennett, Benton, Breekinridge, Bridges, Bugg, Campbell, Carpenter, Caruthers, Chamberlain, Chandler, Chase, Chrisman, Churchwell, Clark, Cobb, Cook, Corwin, Cox, John G. Davis, Dawson, Denn, Dick, Disney, Drum, Dunbar, Eastman, Edgerton, Elliott, Ellison, English, Ewing, Farley, Florence, Gamble, Goodrich, Green, Greenwood, Grey, Grow. Andrew J. Harlan, Harrison, Hendricks, Henn, Houston, Howe, Ingersoll, Johnson, Daniel T. Jones, George W. Jones, Roland Jones, Knox, Lane, Lifdley, Lindsley, McCulloch, McMullen, Macy, Maxwell, Mayall, Middleswarth, John G. Miller, Morgan, Nichols, Norton, Olds, Andrew Oliver, Mordecai Oliver, Peckham, Pennington, Phelps, Preston, Pringle, Ready, Richardson, Ritchey, Robbins, Russell, Sapp, Shannon, Singleton, Samuel A. Smith, William R. Smith, Frederick P. Stanton, Richard H. Stanton, Hestor L. Stevens, Stratton, Andrew Stuart, John L. Taylor, Thurston, Trout, Tweed, Vail, Vansant, Walbridge, Warren, Ellihu B. Washburne, John Wentworth, Tappan Wentworth, Westbrook, Wheeler, Hendrick B. Wright, Yates, and Zollicoffer—107.

NAYS—Messrs. Aiken, Appleton, Ashe, Thomas H. Bayly, Barksdale, Belcher, Benson, Bocock, Boyce, Brooks, Caskie, Chastien, Clingman, Colquit, Craige, Crocker, Cumming, Cutting, Thomas Davis, Dent, De Witt, Dickinson, Dowdell, Edmands, Edmundson, Faulkner, Franklin, Fuller, Goode, Hamilton, Sampson W. Harris, Wiley P. Hsrris, Hastings, Haven, Hibbard, Hill, Hunt, J. Glancey Jones, Keitt, Kerr, Kidwell, Kittredge, Kurtz, Letcher, McDougall, McQueen, Matteson, May, Meacham, Smith Miller, Millson, Morrison, Bishop, Perkins, John Perkins, Jr., Phillips, Pratt, Puyear, Rogers, Rowe, Ruffin, Sabin, Seward, Seymour, Shaw, Gerrit Smith, William Smith, George W. Smyth, Snodgrass, Tracy, Upham, Israel Washburn, jr., and Daniel B. Wright—72.

GARDINER AND MEARS CLAIM.

Mr. PERKINS, of Louisiana, offered the follow ing resolution:

Resolved, That the Judiciary Committee be instructed inquire into the propriety of directing legal proceedings recover any sum of meney which may have been paid any person out of the treasury on the claim of Gardin and Maszs, under the commission which sijudicated claim on Mexico, under the provisions of the treaty of Guadalou Hidalgo.

Mr. CUTTING suggested an amendment to add, "with power to send for persons and papers," is order that the committee might determine against whom to commence suit.

The amendment was agreed to; and the resolution adopted.

The House adjourned.

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Over Selden, Withers & Co's Bank
Jan 18—eod im